

California Department of Education
California Teachers of the Year Program
2008 Application Instructions

Downloadable Application

For your convenience, the *2008 Application* is available as a “fill-in form” on the California Teachers of the Year Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct/>. The fill-in form must be downloaded and saved to a directory or desktop before data entry begins. The application is locked so that the question content, type, size, and spacing may not be altered. The form contains text and numeric fields that appear as small gray boxes for data entry.

Application Formatting

Note: failure to observe formatting requirements may result in disqualification.

Paper, Spacing, and Fonts

All applications must be printed on standard 8½” by 11” white paper. Responses must be typewritten, using a 12 point Arial font, line spacing of 1½, and margins of ¾ inch on right, left, top, and bottom. Do not use compressed type. The introductory letter and essay pages should be numbered at the bottom center of each page, starting with page five.

Sequence

Assemble the application as follows:

2008 Application

Introductory Letter

Essays:

1. Background Experience and Professional Development Activities
2. Student Achievement
3. Professional Biography
4. Community Involvement
5. Philosophy of Teaching
6. Education Issues and Trends
7. The Teaching Profession
8. National Teacher of the Year

Letters of Support

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Submitting the Application

Copies

Provide the original application (printed single-sided) and an additional 20 copies (printed back-to-back). The original and copies must be durably stapled in the upper left-hand corner, not paper clipped or rubber banded. The application must not have decorative covers or bindings.

Mailing or Delivering the Application

Applications must be submitted to the Teacher of the Year Coordinator at your County Office of Education. Please allow ample time for the County Coordinator to process and submit the application to the California Department of Education (CDE) prior to the CDE due date of September 7, 2007.

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Contact Information

The four-page application form is primarily designated for current contact information about the applicant, school, district, county office of education, and county Teacher of the Year coordinator.

Signatures

The application form requires the signatures of the applicant, school principal, district superintendent, and the county superintendent. The applicant's signature certifies that the content of the application is complete and accurate.

School Schedule and Time Constraints

Provide your Monday through Friday schedule including the time you arrive, the time you leave, and your lunch break. Indicate any days and/or times from October 1-19, 2007, that school will not be in session. This information is necessary to ensure the applicant's availability in the classroom in the event of a site visit. Please note that if a teacher is unavailable for a site visit, consideration for California Teacher of the Year is not possible.

Directions To Your School

Provide travel directions to your school to be used by the review team members if you are selected to receive a site visit.

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Introductory Letter and Essays

California Teachers of the Year are frequently called upon to deliver brief, inspirational messages and to address questions from the media, the public, and peers. It is important that our teacher representatives be able to provide answers that are succinct, yet thoughtful and inspirational in nature.

The essence of this application is a set of essays in which the applicant describes his or her background experiences, professional development, and personal views about education. All candidates, as representatives of their county, are considered exemplary in the teaching field. However, application reviewers report that the best applications are those that inspire through specific and compelling examples, and convey a “passion” and commitment above and beyond that of most applications.

Introductory Letter

Introductory Letter From the Applicant to the Selection Committee (1-2 pages)

The letter should:

- Explain what it is like to be a student in your class.
- Relate an inspirational vignette that illustrates an important aspect of education.
- Include a brief example of an ideal real day and a brief example of a less-than-ideal real day in your classroom.

Essays

Include essays on the following topics:

1. Background Experience and Professional Development Activities (1-2 pages)

In list form:

- a. Provide colleges and universities attended, including postgraduate studies, and dates of attendance and degrees earned.
- b. List teaching history with time period, grade level, and subject area of each assignment.
- c. List professional memberships, including information regarding offices held and other relevant activities.
- d. List staff development activities, mentorships and training of other teachers that you have presented.
- e. List awards and other recognition of your teaching.

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2. Student Progress (1 page)

Describe:

- How you know your students are achieving

Consider:

- Assessment methods used
- What you do with information to improve instruction
- How you assess and address the needs of struggling students, etc.

3. Professional Biography (1-2 pages)

Describe:

- The factors that influenced your becoming a teacher
- Your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education

4. Community Involvement (1 page)

Describe:

- Partnerships
- Utilization of resources
- Commitment to your community through service-oriented activities, such as volunteer, civic, and other group activities

Include:

- Family involvement, e.g., establishing local partnerships that strengthen family involvement in children's education
- Community involvement beyond that which is considered basic school-related involvement
- How you get your students involved in community service

Descriptions should not include your personal family obligations.

5. Philosophy of Teaching (1 page)

Describe:

- Your personal views about teaching, including what aspects make you an outstanding teacher
- The rewards you find in teaching
- How your views about teaching are demonstrated in your personal teaching style

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6. Education Issues and Trends (1-2 pages)

Describe:

- What you consider to be the two or three biggest issues in public education today. Address one issue in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.

7. The Teaching Profession (1-2 pages)

Describe:

- Why you would recommend that individuals enter the teaching profession.
- How you strengthen and improve the teaching profession.
- In what ways teachers should be held accountable.

8. National Teacher of the Year (1 page)

If chosen as the 2008 National Teacher of the Year, you would serve as a representative and spokesperson for the nation's teaching profession. What would be your message?

Letters of Support

Include three letters of support from among the following: superintendent, principal, colleague, student, parent, or civic leader. Do not include other materials, such as portfolios or press clippings.